

Message Text

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61

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 SP-03 EB-11 IO-14 H-03 INR-11

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R 190855Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8369

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2309

STADIS//////////

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN, BM

SUBJECT: US-ASEAN ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS

REF: STATE 176399

1. GUB AT PRESENT WOULD BE AT BEST INDIFFERENT AND AT WORST MILDLY OPPOSED TO ITSELF BECOMING INVOLVED IN MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS WITH USG. WHILE, IN VIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS WITH EEC AND JAPAN, GUB COULD HARDLY OBJECT TO, AND MIGHT EVEN TACITLY FAVOR, ITS REGIONAL NEIGHBORS JOINING IN DIALOGUE ON ECONOMIC POLICY WITH USG, GUB'S OWN ARM'S-LENGTH ATTITUDE TOWARD ASEAN WOULD PROBABLY BE REINFORCED IF BURMA SAW IN THE PROPOSED CONSULTATIONS EVIDENCE OF A CLOSER TIE BETWEEN ASEAN AND THE U.S. BURMA WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO GAIN FROM SUCH TALKS IN VIEW OF THE WIDE DIVERGENCES BETWEEN ITS ECONOMIC

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SYSTEM AND THOSE OF ASEAN COUNTRIES, AND IT WOULD IN ANY CASE

BE NERVOUS ABOUT SUCH CONSULTATIONS WITH A SUPERPOWER. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT ANY ASEAN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AS OBSERVER IN CONSULTATIONS.

2. BURMA ASIDE, DESPITE VALIDITY OF SEVERAL OF REFTEL "CONS", WE WOULD SEE NET ADVANTAGES IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE MACHINERY FOR MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC CONSULTATION BETWEEN USG AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN GOVERNMENTS. DIMINISHING THE INORDINATE STRESS ON BILATERAL AID IN OUR SEA RELATIONS AND TRYING TO GET A BETTER FEEL FOR HOW THE WHOLE SPECTURM OF OUR ECONOMIC POLICIES AFFECT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE MOST LAUDABLE GOALS.

3. WE ARE SOMEWHAT NEUTRAL ABOUT THE GOAL OF IMPROVING OUR STANDING WITH THE NON-ALIGNED. IN ONE SENSE, NON-ALIGNMENT IS A FEATURE OF THE OLD BI-POLAR WORLD, AND PERHAPS BEST ALLOWED TO PASS AS QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE INTO HARMLESS IRRELEVANCY. AS AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, IS IT REALISTIC TO EXPECT TO IMPROVE OUR STANDING WITH THE NON-ALIGNED, IN THE ASEAN CONTEXT, WITHOUT DECLARING FOR SEA NEUTRALIZATION, AND FACING IMPLICATIONS THAT FOR OUR MILITARY PRESENCE? I AM NOT URGING THAT WE TACKLE THESE THORNY ISSUES AT THIS TIME; BUT IF WE ARE COURTING THE NON-ALIGNED, IS THIS NOT A PART OF THE BRIDE-PRICE?
OSBORN

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